

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-23 are present in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 10 and 21 have been amended, and claim 2 has been canceled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claim 21 has been amended to maintain proper antecedent basis. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-12. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 2, and Applicant thus respectfully submits that the rejection is moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3 and 10 have been rewritten in independent form.

With regard to the Examiner's Statements of Reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner to any extent that such statement characterizes the invention in a manner at variance with the actual wording of the claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to

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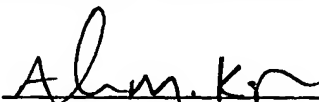
place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact

Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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